

RHETORICAL DRAWINGS

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Document that details the conception, evolution and conclusions of a body of work consisting of seven prints executed in the printmaking technique of intaglio printing in the manner of the state print. The work is discussed by explaining the visual and conceptual associations that occur in an “Alice In Wonderland” manner, where the initial idea is paired with seemingly unrelated topics to establish a progressive visual language. This language is further supported by discussing a comparative of the state print with the idea of the sketchbook as a tool of thought generation and elaboration. The technical aspects of intaglio and the choice of techniques utilized are discussed to support this comparison. How the quality of the prints reflects the quality of the sketchbook and how these techniques combine with the conceptual reasoning, which result in the body of work. Findings for the work are based on three questions that deal with the progression of conceptual reasoning, predictability of recurring ideas and the intentions of the technical choices made.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My initial training as an undergraduate was in painting and drawing. That training was carried out in a very classical and academic manner with drawing studios lasting three hours and forty-five minutes. I was treated as if I had never held a stick of charcoal, nor attempted to render an object. The first few classes of my Drawing I studio were spent rendering the same white washed cube positioned upon white butcher's paper over and over again. I sat for what seemed to be half a semester measuring angles, making corrections without the aid of an eraser, and studying that object in every conceivable position my professor could conjure up in his demented imagination. That cube burned itself into my memory and I found myself spitting out page after page in my sleep. Just prior to attending college, I was discharged from the Marines and still very much influenced by, "One does not question their mentor, but instead will do as they are told." No matter how ridiculous, arbitrary or confounding the orders may be, you carried them out, so I never complained concerning my professor's direction.

After a period of intimate study with the cube, he was gracious enough to provide us with a white, styrofoam sphere as a companion piece to our cube. Other shapes soon followed in the forms of a cone, various sized rectangles, cylinders, and a pyramid. All were painted white of course. This went on for the first three quarters of the semester until mercy was shown and the class was given an egg, a light bulb and a clear bottle to draw. Those welcomed objects were arranged on white butcher's paper and my classmates

along with myself immediately launched into rendering these objects as we saw them. We were allowed to flail about for the first half of the class, especially with the egg, attempting to gain the precise dimensions of our still life. In our moment of exhilaration at not having to draw just shapes and being allowed to draw real objects we were missing the point of our previous training. It was then that he took the bottle and showed us less information by rendering it as it truly is, a cone and a cylinder. Soon we were rendering all of the objects with as much success and proficiency as we rendered the shapes, because we could see the simplicity that underlies complexity. Drawing white objects under normal lighting without a spotlight taught us to recognize the faintest of values and to match them with materials such as charcoal. That cube had set forth a basic understanding of perspective, a subject can be very confusing to a beginner who attempts to draw complex subject matter without proper training.

What I came to understand was that previously I could draw, but I did not know how to draw correctly nor accurately. I also learned to approach an object, or subject, as if it were something knew by not seeing an object for what it is on the outside, but on the inside and stripping it of the accepted recognition. This allowed me to extract the essence and redefine my subject matter, or abstract it. I embraced this reasoning throughout my undergraduate career and it served me well throughout all my course studies, art related or not. Yet, though I was aware of this way of seeing, I was still unable to find a medium that would force me to slow down and conceptualize my ideas into a more stable and thought out process.

Drawing was my first love as an artistic endeavor and continues to be to this day. I spent the first two years of my undergraduate training doing nothing else. This was due in a large part because I was not allowed to take any advanced courses, such as painting, until I had completed my drawing courses. In drawing I found the most honest expression of visually recording ideas. I have always found my sketches to be most appealing, because it maintained the integrity of my thoughts by displaying a journalistic record of how those thoughts were developed, but they had to be refined into an ends. The finished drawing to be turned in for a grade had to be cleaned up, thereby losing the gestured marks and the whole of what I considered to be a diary.

When I finally began to paint I found all my training in drawing to be paying off in a big way. I was taught to paint initially utilizing a glazing technique, This is a very slow and time involved process. I thought I had found what I was looking for, but again all of the initial marks, all of the history, disappeared underneath layer after layer of paint until I was left with what appeared to be the end viewpoint. As before, with the first drawing lessons, I complied with the instruction sensing that it was important to have this knowledge. Yet, outside of class I found myself producing more and more of these drawings that displayed a sort of doodle like appearance, but followed a set form of logic for me. I toyed with the idea of these drawings being my own form of personal language, a set of code that I created based in visual depiction. I would sit through my other courses, such as history, and litter my notes in black ballpoint with visual explanations of how I viewed and understood the subject matter that was being lectured upon. I never

considered these to be illustrations since I was allowing my own viewpoints to show through, thereby recontextualizing the facts.

I took two printmaking courses as an undergraduate and was immediately drawn to the process. This working process, because of its nature to be indirect and laborious, served as an incubation period for my thoughts allowing me that discipline I needed for conceptualization. I was encouraged to preserve the stray marks, the gestural lines and even experiment in some unorthodox methods (after the grading process) by going back and drawing into an edition of prints I had completed, thus rendering the edition as variable. I loved the manual labor involved in producing an edition and then taking each print and attempting to elaborate upon it by direct means and change its meaning, to set it apart from the others like it. I wanted to make it appear as a stage in a process instead of being a replication of many like it. As it stands today, I do not have one consistent edition from my undergraduate studies, but rather sets of prints that serve as diaries of the evolution of a concept.

My studies as a graduate printmaker have been focused on applying the discipline of technique with a discipline of thought. I began by studying a subject that has always been elusive to me in an academic setting, mathematics. Mathematics, I have found, are very boring and incomprehensible whenever put forth as language or equations. This inability to follow the logic made the subject all the more interesting and enigmatic to my sense of curiosity. I began by studying numerology and number sequencing. The dead ends I reached here in my ability to comprehend led me to other areas of concentration or further clues to investigate. I arrived at the study of geometry not based on any

mathematical principle, but simply by viewing the patterns of number sequences as three-dimensional objects and recognizing the polyhedrons that came about. Nor were any conventional equation notations used in the study of geometry. I arrived at my answers by intuition and the progression of an idea, which I then recorded in a notation of my own devise.

I continued to follow this line of investigation, ultimately realizing that I was not attempting to learn or study mathematics. Rather, I was enthralled with the manner in which my reasoning was working. I was not following the logic of my subject, how could I without understanding its language, but I was taking liberties with the existing relations while also creating my own relations based upon how I viewed the information. Once I had an idea concerning the information at hand I did not consult textbooks, instead I experimented with the idea in every conceivable combination that I could conjure up. I was not interested in the right or wrong of my product. I became only concerned with the manner in which this information had progressed and to where it was headed.

As of recently, I have also begun to include representational imagery along with the abstract imagery of my notations. This creates a sort of abstract feel altogether, a visual world that can only exist in the imagination and reflects the ambiguities that I encountered in mathematics. When I view this work in retrospect, I can't help but to think of Alice In Wonderland where everything is topsy turvy and no form of conventional logic exists. Yet, the story is told with a form of logic that is to be understood through and limited by the reader's imagination.

The process of creating a state print will allow me to continue pursuing in a progressive, rather than a logical manner. The individual print does not hold importance over the whole. Rather, each print will serve as a journalistic page from the completed body of work. A viewpoint one could take is to imagine each page as being from a diary that records the constant refining of ideas and the introduction of new ideas. This technique I have found to be necessary to my creative processes and allows me to record my ideas as an ongoing conversation of visual thought from state to state.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

I propose to execute a body of work that explores the relationship of random thoughts and ideas in a progressive, visual thought pattern. The structure of this thought pattern will be based on the relationship between representational and abstract imagery. Any symbolic meanings in imagery that may arise, along with the alterations in those meanings when placed along side other images leading to ambiguities, will be studied and pursued. I also propose these three questions concerning the work:

1. How does the work present itself in a progressive manner from state to state? Can the viewer follow through the initial idea of the first print and relate it to the subsequent prints and back again?
2. Does the visual language maintain a sense of surprise for the viewer, or does it become systematic and predictable?

3. Do the techniques involved best define the ideas and intentions of the work?

METHODOLOGY

This body of work is to be executed in the manner of a state print consisting of five to ten states. A variety of technical disciplines in etching are to be utilized with the prints retaining a drawing quality. During the process of this work, I will maintain a journal documenting my technical and conceptual efforts. Upon completion of the work, I will write a paper analyzing the work and process, whereby the journal will serve as a basis. This paper will be accompanied with illustrations, as well as slides of the completed work. My final task will be to mount a public exhibition of the work.

CHAPTER 2

FIRST STATE

I began this first state by making light etchings of drawings that occurred randomly. I sketched the first thing that came to mind and did not worry if it related to the previous drawing I had just made. During this initial process of trying to put my ideas and thoughts into some visual analogy, I noticed the almost carnival-like, or Alice In Wonderland, appearance that the overall print had begun to take on. There is a field of small drawings that tend to pull the eye in the same manner as the voice of the Mad Hatter. To hear this voice is to rely on the imagination and picture the Mad Hatter as a carnival barker. I can hear his calling my attention mixed with the background noise of a festive crowd, the rings and dings of games, and the grinding of gears from the rides. I also associate this mechanical grinding with my own conceptual reasoning.

This brings me to the drawing at the center that appears to be cable suspensions, or some sort of carnival ride. For the latter association, I will refer to this drawing as the roller coaster. I associate the roller coaster with the process of initializing ideas. It represents the attempts that are carried out in trying to assimilate enough ideas into one cohesive whole. Those first thoughts sort of twisted and turned until I was able to focus a direction. This idea of searching brings to mind topological drawings, which define the surfaces of three-dimensional objects and have the appearance of twisting and turning. In my own case, I would apply a topological definition to the appearance of my reasoning, which has a curved surface but does reason itself out.

Once this carnival atmosphere had been applied with the concept of many ideas becoming one, or being heard at once, I began to search for a central character to cast as a guide or narrator. Again thinking of Alice In Wonderland led me to combine the nature of this tale with the carnival atmosphere of the work. Borrowing from Alice, the Mad Hatter became a carnival barker. Yelling above the crowd, this figure's job is to gain the attention of the spectator or viewer and buy a little of their time for contemplation. This also made me think of a snake oil salesman. The words are offered up for whoever cares to listen.

The cube that to which the barker gestures is a device I use to illustrate ambiguity. It is actually a hexagon that has been divided into thirds. Each third is then assigned a graduated value that works to define the illusion of a three-dimensional object. Properly defined, this is an isometric polyhedron. Isometrics is a two-dimensional way of rendering three-dimensional objects without the aid of perspective. In essence, it relies on ambiguity to define space. This ambiguity refers to the content of the barker's voice that defines the nature of the work. The cube is his discourse, or tale, that has the distinction of being concrete and solid, yet has its roots in an abstract concept. This is how I perceive thought formation and work process. These two elements working together allow abstract information to be worked into some recognizable form, or foundation. To warn the viewer to not trust conventional logic, the Mad Hatter carries a card in his hat that states, "Information 10 cents ". This seems to state a message to beware of your own reasoning, or to open your mind to new lines of reasoning and creativity. Along with this message the viewer is presented with a teacup containing a beverage. I associate this as a symbol

of conversation or discourse between people over coffee or tea. These two beverages are known for their caffeine content and can be viewed as analogies for alertness. It is a warning to myself to stay on my toes when reasoning my own thoughts. I also view the teacup as information that is being offered to the viewer in the content of the work. The drink me tag invites one to participate and engage with the work. (Refer to fig. 1.)

Although I was beginning to recognize thought pattern I still wanted the choices of development to not become predictable. I wanted the information to appear to follow its own form of logic that was to be based on my own thoughts combined with the previous states. Each state would serve as a discourse upon the other with room for new information.

By the time the time I completed this first state, I was in a manner of playfulness with my drawing. I wanted the overall appearance to be dominant towards drawing.

Regardless of the tools I was using to achieve the outcome, I focused on the act of drawing as a means to communicate. This, along with the discipline involved in producing the alterations and/or elaborations between states allows for retrospection. I also found the time involved with the printing an edition became a time for contemplating the next state.

SECOND STATE

For the second state, I became more focused on the voice of the Mad Hatter. I had wondered what he would sound like, which goes to say I became concerned with the content. I wanted the voice to be audible communication. At this time, I began to learn to

play the guitar. While this occupied my free time, I allowed what I learned about music as a language to permeate the work and serve as a visual means of depicting language. This would also serve to give an audible reference, a voice to complement a written or drawn style.

The information concerning the music I have let come to dominate the upper-left hand corner of the second state. This information is represented as musical notation and chord structure and, is at first glance, the technical aspect of representing music. Yet, the technique of music notation is the visual language by which music is recorded for interpretation into what we hear. I contrast this concept with my own endeavors of drawing and printmaking techniques to interpret my ideas into a visual language that makes me think. The ideas that I ponder, I interpret as the singing of the Mad Hatter's voice feeding me knowledge. I wanted to further establish this link between the Mad Hatter and the audible. So, I decided the best measure to take was to transform the Mad Hatter into a device that is easily recognizable as an auditory apparatus. Already involved with music mentally, I thought of a record player, especially the old victrola record players. I have always liked the ambiguous appearance it has of looking like a giant talking flower. For some reason, I also kept hearing that unrefined quality that comes with early recordings, in the voice of the Mad Hatter. I pictured the Hatter's voice droning out through the soundhorn perched on top, while his mouth parted to reveal the tongue with the needle of the victrola attached.

The teacup is in front of the mouth with the tongue tasting or vocalizing the contents. I find this to be an ambiguous, creative and humorous shift in redefining the concept of a

narrator. It plays upon the idea of ingesting information and redefining it by vocalizing what one has learned. This depiction also reinforces the warnings of the Hatter from the first state, to keep an open mind and maintain a method of thinking by which anything can happen. The incorporation of the head of the Hatter with a machine also stresses the idea of process and work. These two elements are key components towards gaining insight. I imagined thoughts working like cogs to process information and making decisions that would lead to a product. This would explain the device to the left of the Hatter. The cube was transformed into a schematic drawing of a coil with a handle for winding like the ones you would find on a child's toy. At the end of the handle is an explosive fuse. This fuse, on what seems to be a toy, causes some degree of apprehension. This apprehension, or element of surprise, is best contrasted with the reaction of child when first experiencing a jack-in-the-box, or a trip through a haunted house at the carnival. In this case, I wait for whatever is within to spring forth. This best explains how I rely on the outcome of associations in the work. (Refer to fig. 2.)

The overall appearance of the second state is not what I had anticipated, but that is not to say that I am unhappy with the results. On the contrary, I am very happy with the progression from the first state to the second. There is an element of surprise between the two states that renders them each with their own uniqueness, yet a kinship can be established through the technique of altering the plate. The marring of the plate during the process of grinding and erasure lends to a history that is being represented visually, as well as conceptually. The remnants of the first state are incorporated into the second state as historical reference points. Thereby solidifying the conceptual processes of the two.

The two elements that are dominant between the two are those of the drawing quality and the matter of ambiguity, which I am happy to see.

THIRD STATE

The concept of thought, reason and mechanical devices, that I had begun to play with in the second state, were still influencing the visual images in my head. Between the second and third states, I kept hearing that little voice inside telling me to tightly strap down my thinking cap. In my imagination, I was building the equivalent of what I thought a thinking cap would look like. I made a lot sketches based around some pretty strange devices, but none of these I intended to use. I did not want a preplanned concept when I began the actual rendering. What I was trying to do in these drawing exercises was loosen up the relationship between my conceptual processes and the actual process of drawing. I wanted to build a strong inventory of images in my head. I thought that by doing this, that when it came time to actually render the object on the plate, I would be able to let my hand roam freely. Instead of the drawing quality being tight and descriptive, like that of the first two states, I was leaning more towards a gestural feel for this object.

I have always admired and preferred the gesture drawing, to a drawing that is completed to the point of having a photographic quality. There is far more information for the senses and the eye. In a gesture drawing, all of the history remains for consideration. It can be deciphered one line after the other. Layer after layer, we are allowed to witness the first initial marks that explain how the artist has perceived the

information. The rough sketchy line gives way to that with more finesse. It is evidence of confidence being built by familiarization. It is an excellent example of historical process.

It is this element of history, along with the unrestrained line quality, that I desired to take place in this third state. The background had become spatially deep in perception because of the previous history. The ideas from before and now were melding into one and at the same time could be interpreted in many different ways.

When I first etched the thinking cap it was much too heavy, too dark. That was because of the length of time that I had let the plate etch in the acid. This heavy object appeared as if it had been stuck on, rather than working with the previous information. To remedy this, I began to grind the area down in inconsistent pressures in different areas. This left variances in value and rendered the object a more sketchy quality. Instead of the thinking cap working as a singular element, like that of the Mad Hatter, it became synonymous with the background and would not serve the purpose as narrator. My intentions were to let the third state, as a whole, be the narrator. I would also consider this as another reason why I was referencing mechanical devices, or non-human objects.

This third state presents a definite shift in the manner in which I was beginning to perceive my own thoughts. In retrospect, when I was executing the first two states I was concentrating entirely too much on an end product, or a finished look. Instead of viewing the information in my head as the myriad of ideas that it was and rendering in that manner, I was feeling I had to clean it up a bit. With the third state, I wanted to display the field that was my mind. I wanted to see the equivalent of an inventor's workbench.

Where the contraption sits half finished, surrounded by tools, spare parts from the previous designs and revisions of its process. (Refer to fig.3.)

Overall, the third state is another piece that contains its own uniqueness, yet is in keeping with the first and second states. I feel it actually personifies the idea of process better than the previous states due to the rough and unrefined manner in which it has been handled. The thinking cap, besides being gestural, is actually very flat and proportionally inaccurate in appearance. This is a nice element that complements my ideas of work in progress and reflects the conceptual and technical relationship that I wanted to achieve in the drawing.

FOURTH STATE

In the fourth state I wanted to animate the thinking cap from the third state. I was striving for an allusion to progress. I began by arranging different sized polyhedra in a circular manner around the pedal that protrudes from the thinking cap. This was to indicate a feeling of moving forward conceptually, gears turning in the mechanical grind of thought. This device is to also indicate a moving forward from one state to the other. This drawing maintained the mechanistic atmosphere and again brought to mind the carnival, because of its appearing like a ferris wheel.

To the far left I have added a simple drawing of chain links, whereby the links symbolize pieces of information being assembled into a whole. This drawing I rendered as a schematic to give the impression of a blueprint. A recorded thought that has yet to be realized in actuality. I believe this refers to my thoughts while they still exist in my head,

before they have taken on a presence in the work. It is a plan for progress, rather than progress itself. When I compare the third state to the fourth state, this idea makes sense because there doesn't appear to be much change from one to the other. It is almost like looking at the same print. I feel I may have been concentrating too hard on manipulating the image from the third state, instead of dealing with the idea. There definitely is a lack of surprise in this state that is very evident between the first three states.

Although I am somewhat disappointed in this state, there still exist some qualities that I like. There is a sort of mental rambling going on, a struggle of conceptualization. The drawing, combined with the background, has a sketchbook quality of attempting to fuse ideas. I feel this supports the idea of each print being a journal entry. The simplicity of the drawing style is in accordance with the quality one might find in a sketchbook. An atmosphere of searching for the right words is maintained and it does not appear as being overworked. I also feel the historical process is being preserved, but then again that element is a given due to the lack of change from the third to the fourth state. (Refer to fig.4.)

It is these qualities that I felt I must hold with care, as if carrying broken glass. I wanted to bear them in mind when beginning the fifth state, yet not dwell heavily on them. I felt in doing so, I would only repeat myself again.

FIFTH STATE

While contemplating the fifth state, I had made up my mind not to eliminate any present information. I wanted to work with what was present, but in a manner that was

not simply manipulating what existed. I wanted to elaborate on the idea of the sketchbook as a tool possessing the potential to serve as a source of generating information. My thoughts were very inclined to these prints being one as a bound source and also holding new revelations with the turn of each page. These pages I saw as consisting of scraps of paper, thoughts quickly notated on a napkin, blackboard configurations and obsessive computations that when assembled take on a classic sense of reasoning. With this realization, I thought of the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci and how they in themselves are great works of art. Almost everything that crossed the man's intellect is defined in his notes, describing a lifetime of creativity. This reinforced the idea that the artist is more than one who relies solely on his craftsmanship, but is capable of reason in his work.

The additions in the fifth state I wanted to appear as if they were scrawled in the same manner I would draw them in my sketchbook. These additions include a classically rendered head and a contraption that is in large part yo-yo with an assortment of tools sprouting from the middle. This device can be explained by an event that was transpiring outside the work, yet like the guitar found itself becoming a continuing presence.

During the period of time that deals with this project I was attempting to replace the transmission in my truck. This procedure was totally unknown to me. The opportunity of tinkering with a foreign subject, coupled with the seven hundred dollars it would cost to have someone else do it, gave me the initiative to attempt this. Once I had enlisted the help of my brother-in-law and purchased a manual, I found the instruction and technical process very easy. It is actually the manual process that is difficult and laborious. A great amount of time is spent in a very confined space. This restricts movement that is needed

to search for different parts that are to be disconnected or removed. The majority of these parts are located at the head of the transmission, which incidentally also happens to be the area that provides the least amount of space.

I was also growing very tired mentally at this time. I had been working on this project since July and it had been nonstop up until now, which was November. I was drained during the fourth and fifth states, but continued to work. This mental fatigue combined with the time that I struggled with the automotive project, did not leave much time for rest. I had been spending my weekdays confined to this project and the weekends confined under a truck attempting to bench press a large piece of machinery. I believe these two elements are the contributing factors to the weakness of the fourth state and the similarity the fifth state bears to it.

The similarity I speak of is not to imply that I think the fifth state is weak. I believe it is a strong piece when compared with the first three states. It adds enough of a shift to reestablish the element of surprise, but only moves slightly from the fourth. I can best explain this by stating I needed to take a break and deal with something else.

An aspect of the fifth state that I like is the reintroduction of ambiguity. The area where I drew the head lies over the thinking cap. The gadgetry of the thinking cap, along with the yo-yo and tools gives this a sort of Frankenstein-like appearance. It appears as if there are mechanical protrusions on top of the head. This absorbing of elements I believe is the resolution to the concept of a thinking cap. These associations go on to include the coil appearing as a spine and the toy winding handle looking very much like a skeletal hip and pelvis. What I see is a device that has taken on a surrealistic human likeness and

takes me back to the third state, where I desired to exclude a personified narrator. I wanted the work itself to be speaking to me and I feel as if this is a strong start in that direction. A great contributing factor to me seeing this is the fact that I included a human face. The outcome of its placement along with the rest of what existed works on the level of my perception. I am very satisfied with this image that hides itself at first and is discovered only through close inspection. It reasserts the idea of having to absorb a work in its entirety to gain its meaning, much like a sketchbook is to be viewed. (Refer to fig. 5.)

SIXTH STATE

When I began work on the sixth state I was contemplating all of the work I had put into this project thus far. My thoughts were focused around contrasting the discipline of physical labor with that of mental labor. The connection between the two, the time in the process and what is produced or gained from those experiences. One of the first images to come to mind was a clock. The other was a piston serving as an allegory for work or drive. (I also see this as again referencing my experiences with the transmission.) I liked this combination and believed it worked well to convey my thoughts and feelings at this point.

I wanted the drawings of the sixth state to further aid in bridging the background with the figurative element that had arisen. I was searching for a way to absorb this new information and have it interact with the surroundings. I chose the area between the music notation and the coil because of the possibilities in the space that existed. I

believed that a drawing containing sparse descriptive qualities would serve as a bridge or compositional tie. I found this to work not just for the sake of design, but also on a conceptual level. The drawing, which I worked into the area, was that of the piston and clock. The clockface was superimposed on the piston, whereby the whole image was then drawn over the music notation. I enjoy this ambiguous referencing of time. The clock is mechanistic and brings to mind a manual process where enlightenment is gained through experience. The other being the music, where time and sound are mathematically structured and when experienced also produce enlightenment.

Upon completion of these additions, I feel the personality and composition of the print has been renewed. There is a fresh, more unified appearance due to a light density that establishes structure without becoming heavy or dominant. The mechanistic feel now pervades as a schematic that details a machine or a pattern of thought that is to result in acquiring new knowledge. The allusion to the sketchbook or diary has also been maintained and even reinforced by the new element in the referencing of time. With a sketchbook, we think of entries, pages or sporadic moments being recorded that detail some process of cognitive reason. The atmosphere of the sixth state is now at a level where that concept can be derived and aptly placed in one's thoughts when reviewing the work. When compared alongside the previous states it represents a definite change and surprise for the viewer. The work as a whole, first through sixth states, bring to mind pages, or layers of thought. Each layer, in relationship to the whole, is a moment of time or space. This relationship serves as the incubation period in the maturation of an idea.

The enlightenment is the real reward that is to be gained from such an undertaking. Within each period, or phase of involvement, there exist the components that expound upon the idea that I am formulating in my head. During analysis, I listen for the correct voice among the many that will guide me in the next process of decisions. This is the aspect I desired to comment on in the seventh state. (Refer to fig. 6)

SEVENTH STATE

The seventh state is the solidification of the work that has transpired before it. I wished for this state to bear witness as a receiver of the knowledge that the work holds. Studying the first state, I noticed how a lot of the content of this state, in relation to the subsequent states, is about establishing intent and being vocal in those intentions. The Mad Hatter appears as one upon his soapbox making a declaration. Early in the course of the work, the Hatter disappears or becomes obsolete. When I view the body of work as a whole it is easy to see why this has happened. In the first and second states, I was focused on words, intentions and promises of delivery. These devices mean well and serve their purpose, but by the third state and throughout the subsequent states I had become focused on the actions that would deliver the goods. The Hatter had taken a backseat to the processes of work and reason.

I also desired for this seventh state to convey a sense of affirmation towards my efforts while involved with this project. In the second state, the last state where the Hatter is present, he has evolved into a device which is associated with speaking, delivering information or explanation. For this seventh state, a character is introduced that serves the

opposite function of what the Hatter's was. Instead of speaking, it listens and receives. It is the wiser for knowing what has taken place.

Noticing the victrola in the second state, I was reminded of the RCA dog. It peers into the device with the same sense of curiosity and bewilderment that I have towards many of the nuances that have been woven into the work, like the experience with the transmission. The dog, like myself, is steadfast and attentive.

These new additions are to be the culmination of work, the sharing of secrets, enlightenment. I wanted the figurative face from the fifth state to appear as if it has turned and now, shielding with its hand, whispers to the dog. This works, in a sense, but the new face and hand also appear as if they have sprouted out the side of the existing head from the fifth state. This ambiguous and unexpected outcome renders a whole new view where the dog and original face are sharing the information by the same ear.

I had intended the dog to be a sort of autobiographical character, myself as the receiver of secrets, but in hindsight I also include the Hatter as serving proxy for myself. I began by making the proclamation, the statement of intent. Throughout the course of the work the idea of, "I shall..." becomes, "I do.", or, "I act upon." Here in the seventh state there again appears direct reference to myself, but in an unexpected dual role. There is the dog, which represents the direct involvement with the work. The other is the face from the fifth state, which I view as myself involved in the outside activities, the transmission and the guitar, that found introduction into the work. The dog and the face are two sides of the same coin that are rewarded for patience and diligence.

Besides the additions, the other notable change in this seventh state is the loss of the teacup that was located where the dog now exists. From the first state, throughout the other states, the teacup has represented a source of knowledge, an elixir that has slowly been consumed as a result of the re-workings and modifications between states. Within each state new knowledge was gained rendering the teacup ever more faint in appearance, until here in the seventh state the consumption gives way to the enlightened individual. (Refer to fig.7)

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

I would now like to further benefit the investigation of this project by addressing the questions that I proposed prior to the execution. The first question proposed:

1. How does the work present itself in a progressive manner from state to state? Can the viewer follow through the initial idea of the first print and relate it to the subsequent prints and back again?

I believe the answer to the first part of this question lies in the technique that was used to execute this project. The process of the state print allows for key information from each separate state be preserved for the use of illustrating and conceptually binding an on-going thought. I can best explain this by comparing the first two states. Starting with the second state, I would like to point out the music notation, the victrola and the coil

device. Upon studying the first two images, the two most common traits, or associations, would be those of voice or language. If this print was viewed alone, one might understand it to be a solitary piece. With further investigation the process by which it was executed would be discovered and a comparison could be made between state one and state two. In state one the viewer can see the Mad Hatter with his cup of tea, the cube and the background of imagery. Because of the popularity of the Mad Hatter in western literature, the associations with “ Alice In Wonderland “ can be ascertained. What is noticeable about the Hatter is his manner of poise. He appears to be on his soapbox and gesturing towards a marbleized cube. When a closer inspection is made of this cube, depending on the viewer’s knowledge of perspective, it is discovered to actually be flat. While contemplating this optical illusion and the ambiguous nature of its appearance, it becomes synonymous with the world in which the Hatter exists.

Having absorbed this information from the first state, a comparison is then made with the second state. Within the second state the Hatter has assumed what appears to be a new identity as a victrola. This device is a tool of communication or language and refers to the manner of the Hatter in the first state. The marbleized cube has evolved into the coil device. This is understood as being another facet to its nature for appearing many sided and the mechanical aspect is in association with the victrola.

Upon viewing this work as a whole, I find it does present an overall atmosphere of progression. There exists one area of where the progression appears to have almost come to a halt. This area is the fourth state that resembles the third and fifth states a little too closely. The progression between the third and fourth states is almost none existent. This

applies as well when comparing the fourth state with the fifth state. Yet, a comparison between the third and fifth states presents a great change in the appearance between the two and restores the immediacy of the progression. This leads me to believe that the fourth state can be exempt from display to preserve the progressive nature that I had intended.

Another element to support the overall progression is the introduction of the coil device, in the second state, that establishes a mechanistic quality. This mechanistic quality remains as a dominant aspect throughout the course of the work. It also expands upon itself by evolving with the new information and ideas of the subsequent states.

To address the second part of this question, I call attention towards the history of the project that is depicted state to state on a conceptual and visual level. In comparing each state, there exists both added and remnant information that links each state. One could even possibly figure out the order by comparing the wear caused by reworking the plate and studying the layers of information to see when erasures occur and additions are made. I also believe that once the ambiguous nature that was set forth with the first and second states is grasped by the viewer, it will provide them the freedom to make their own associations in imagery and find ties that would explain choices made. I realize this aspect may slightly alter their conclusions from my own, unless study of the work is done so in conjunction with the reading of this document or direct, intimate knowledge from myself is gained.

I believe the viewer would come away with a sense of progression on a conceptual level after having viewed the work in its entirety. That which has transpired is a mapping

of imagery and thought processes that results in its own form of logic. In the first two states, I addressed the outspoken or declarative. The rest of the work delivers action upon those intentions. These actions result in the final seventh state that is an allegory of conceptual and personal reward. This final state, in relation to the first state, informs the viewer that change comes about through diligent work and progress. The dog is myself having been taught new tricks. The Mad Hatter also still lurks in the end. He has only evolved and is located within the surrealistic, figurative qualities that I identified in the fifth state. This notion maintains the nature associated with “ Alice In Wonderland “ where surprises are to be expected. This leads me in addressing the second question that I proposed.

2. Does the visual language maintain a sense of surprise for the viewer, or does it become systematic and predictable?

The one thing I wanted to avoid during the execution of this project was the possibility of it becoming predictable. There is a very good chance that this will happen when working with this technique. After all, one is dealing with the same drawing and piece of paper in a sense. The key to preventing this outcome is to concentrate on the results of analysis and what visual manifestations they will take on. It is also wise to allow one's self enough time to fully visualize the next step conceptually.

As I have stated before, the progression that lies between the states, both visually and conceptually, preserves the element surprise and of spontaneity. I maintained a watchful eye on these two key factors very well until the fourth state. It was in the fourth state that

the progression slips and predictability became evident. I touched on this subject in the findings of question one and briefly discussed how the fourth state resembled the third and fifth states too closely. The whole reason for this being was I had not taken the time required for realization and the time that is needed for a break.

I was concentrating too much on the product of the print and not giving enough consideration to what I was actually putting on the plate. In doing so, the outcome resulted in an image that had not progressed enough from the third state to merit the potential that it held. Deep down I knew this and tried to remedy it by immediately executing the fifth state. Again the results were predictability.

When I viewed the project as a whole I could sense a dragging of the heels within the area of these three states, but could not finger the culprit. It wasn't until a class critique that the fourth state became evident as the print that caused this lag. Why I could not see it before is also a matter dealing with time. Before, I spoke of the length of time I had invested in this project up until this point and the other projects that were taking place outside of class. The project was begun in July and this fourth state was executed late in the fall semester. I had been working almost none stop and by the result of this state it is quite obvious I was burned out, growing tired and in need of a break. Instead of breaking away to something else, giving my mind a needed rest, I continued on and the work suffered. I also tried to defend this lapse of surprise by comparing it to the lapse of reason that sometimes occurs in a concept. This was of course fooling no one but myself. I finally accepted this state as dead weight and took the advice of omitting it from exhibition alongside the other states.

What I do see in a comparison between the third and fifth states is that fully realized element that I had hoped to achieve in the fourth state. There is the surprise in shift and a definite evidence of progression. If I had given the proper respect to the time involved, thus allowing myself a break, I may have realized what is the fifth state as the fourth instead. I finally took that break in the form of Christmas break. When I returned at the beginning of the spring semester, I very quickly executed the sixth and seventh states. These two states firmly reestablished my hold and guidance on progression and surprise. The success of these two states is the result of having time to reflect on where I had traveled conceptually and realized, in a clearer sense, where the work was headed.

In the third question that I proposed I wanted to address the techniques involved in this process and the advantages or disadvantages they present. This will hopefully further explain the work by assessing the delivery of information. The third question reads as follows:

3. Do the techniques involved best define the ideas and intentions of the work?

Let me start by stating that all of the techniques involved are from the printmaking repertoire. These techniques specifically are:

- A. Etching-Intaglio method in which lines are incised in a metal plate by acid. The surface is covered with an acid resist ground that is scratched to expose the metal to the acid. The value of the line is controlled by the length of time that exposure takes place.

- B. Aquatint-Intaglio method in which tones are obtained by powdered rosin or spray paint. The acid bites around this to create tonal value and allows an atmospheric quality to exist.
- C. Drypoint-Intaglio method in which a sharp needle or diamond point is used to scratch a line onto a metal plate. The resultant burr of metal that is raised holds more ink than the incised line itself and gives the rich, velvety stroke that is characteristic to this technique. The plate wears rapidly during the print process and allows only small editions to take place.
- D. State Print-The state print is the result of a method whereby the content of the original print, or first state, is viewed as an ongoing process and allowed further development into other states. Any information that is to be added or deleted is done so utilizing the same matrix, or plate, that the first state was executed on. These changes are made by scraping or grinding the area to be worked into the next state. The new information is then brought into focus by the various techniques that will dictate form and content.

When I began this project, I wanted to explore the relationship of random thoughts in a progressive, visual thought pattern. I also desired the work to maintain a drawing-like quality in appearance. I chose intaglio printing techniques because of their characteristics that relate the finished product to a drawing. The process of etching captures the integrity of mark making, thereby achieving an association with the hand. Aquatinting tones allows the use of value for detailing information in the same manner as graphite or a

piece of charcoal. Drypoint is the most direct means of working the plate. The marks are applied directly to the plate by the hand rather than with acid. This in itself is drawing and possesses an element of fragility that is associated with a drawing. The product of drawing contains an element of preciousness in the fact that there is only one in existence. With drypoint the same atmosphere of uniqueness applies in the printing process. For every print that is produced, a certain amount of quality is lost due to the repeated pressure of the press destroying the burrs that hold much of the ink. Every subsequent print that is printed results in an image that is more faint than the previous print.

The whole process of state printing introduces elemental surprises that we could not ordinarily predict. The abrasion of the surface of the plate between alterations lifts certain tonal values and establishes others by creating an atmosphere of flux. This movement works well in supporting the notion of progression in the content of the imagery. I also consider this process of removal drawing in itself. I carried out the alterations by a simple means of scraping, sandpaper and utilizing a handheld, power grinder. These were either employed sequentially or individually to render the effects that I believed best complemented the work. Scraping is the best means by which to remove those areas that were deeply etched, such as the Mad Hatter and the teacup. Sandpaper, specifically automotive body finishing paper, was used to restore the brightness of an area that had been dulled into darker tones by the removal process. The most notable area that provides an example of this would be the dog of the seventh state that formerly contained the teacup along with the mechanical gadgetry of the third state. Once that area had been

erased it was necessary to polish it, using the automotive sandpaper, to provide the brightness in which the dog occurs. Once I had established the dog in the manner that I saw fit, I further illuminated it by aquatinting the surrounding area.

The powergrinder can be viewed as a handheld pencil or drypoint needle. When this tool is used, depending on the grain of the abrasive, it deeply scratches the plate and records the gestural movements of the hand. When the plate is inked and printed these scratches will show as circular movements. These movements can be controlled to a great extent with experience and allow one to reach a variety of results in the print. The best effect I have found it to aid in rendering, besides the removal of images, is that of atmospheric qualities.

In the first state there is a combination of all the techniques that I have given background on. Alterations were even made during the process to push back some of the initial drawings so as to bring the resulting print forward. This would explain the busy nature of the background. The drypoint that was utilized to render the Mad Hatter was used because of my desire to establish a firm intent towards drawing. By rendering him with such draftsmanship and detail, created an atmosphere of contemplation for myself, a sort of priming my mind. The result is a print that bears a striking kinship with drawing.

The third state, presents a shift in the quality of draftsmanship and character of the line. There is no longer the care given to rendering that is present in the first and second states. This state presents us with a manner that elaborates with a descriptive quality rather than refined assuredness. This is also the first print that demonstrates the effects that can be achieved between the sandpaper and the grinder. This is within the device that appears

very misty and unsure in its commitment. The effect overall, is that of an apparition, or something which is fading in and out of view. The end result presents the viewer with a surprise in delivery. Where one might expect the third state to appear with the same qualities of the first and second states, instead is shown a progression not only in concept but in the execution as well.

The fifth and sixth states are very dense as a result of the previous states and the alterations the plate has been put through. The work has definitely taken on the atmosphere of a sketchbook. By comparing this to a sketchbook, I am speaking of many ideas that are essentially steppingstones to a greater whole. These ideas that would appear to be unrelated in separate drawings are contained in one work and describe the history of a process of conceptual reasoning. There is also a history recorded in the stray marks, previous and faint imagery, and alterations. This works to help the print further assume the identity of a page from a sketchbook, where erasures and smudges may be evident.

The seventh state brings to mind a patchwork quilting that has assimilated all of the given information into a whole and helps to establish my intentions of a visual thought pattern. This wholeness, at the same time, carries within it a breakdown of all that has taken place from the first state. A slight return to the drawing quality of the first state is presented here in the rendering of the dog. Although the dog is executed with line etching and no drypoint, it bears a stylistic resemblance to the characters of the first two states. This works to tie the beginning with the end. The absence of drypoint shows a break or progression from the beginning. This allows the line etching to be perceived as an

element that works to keep the dog related to the information surrounding it in its present sense.

CONCLUSION

Overall, I am happy and satisfied with the results of this project on both conceptual and technical levels. I feel that this method of reasoning and working does present possibility for progression in a body of work and does more than depict stages of development. By utilizing the state print process a history is recorded that presents many approaches towards viewpoint. This history also allows for each layer of information and thought patterns to be orchestrated into a conversation. With each state a page unfolds to reveal further discourse on an ongoing discussion.

I have also enjoyed the unpredictability of my own reasoning when I began to analyze the work as a whole. Associations were made in hindsight that were not considered during the work process. I had not realized the impact of my life outside of the work had on the outcome. I am speaking primarily of the two endeavors that occupied my free time, my involvement with music and the transmission. As an artist, I realize my whole life plays an important role in my work. The degree to which that role is was not evident to me until I probed my work in exhaustive detail and make many of these connections, which might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

I have but one strong piece of advice for those attempting to utilize this technique in their own work. That advice is to allow full development of concept. Take a break when

you feel the burden on your back. This will help to prevent any predictability from arising and maintain a sense of surprise and progression within the work.

At this point I rest with my findings and look forward to implementing this technique and method in future projects. This particular project, I feel, has run its course. What has been gained or left to say would best be applied in the execution of a new project.



Drif
Me

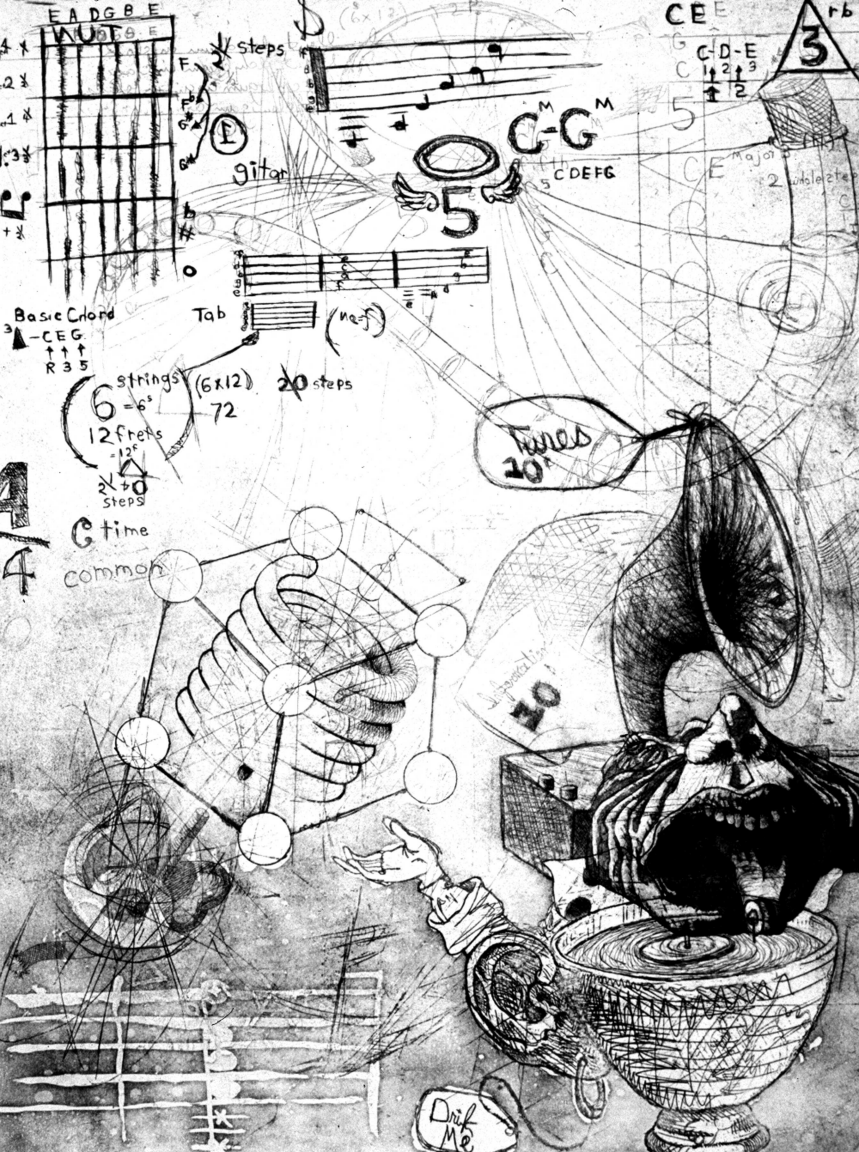
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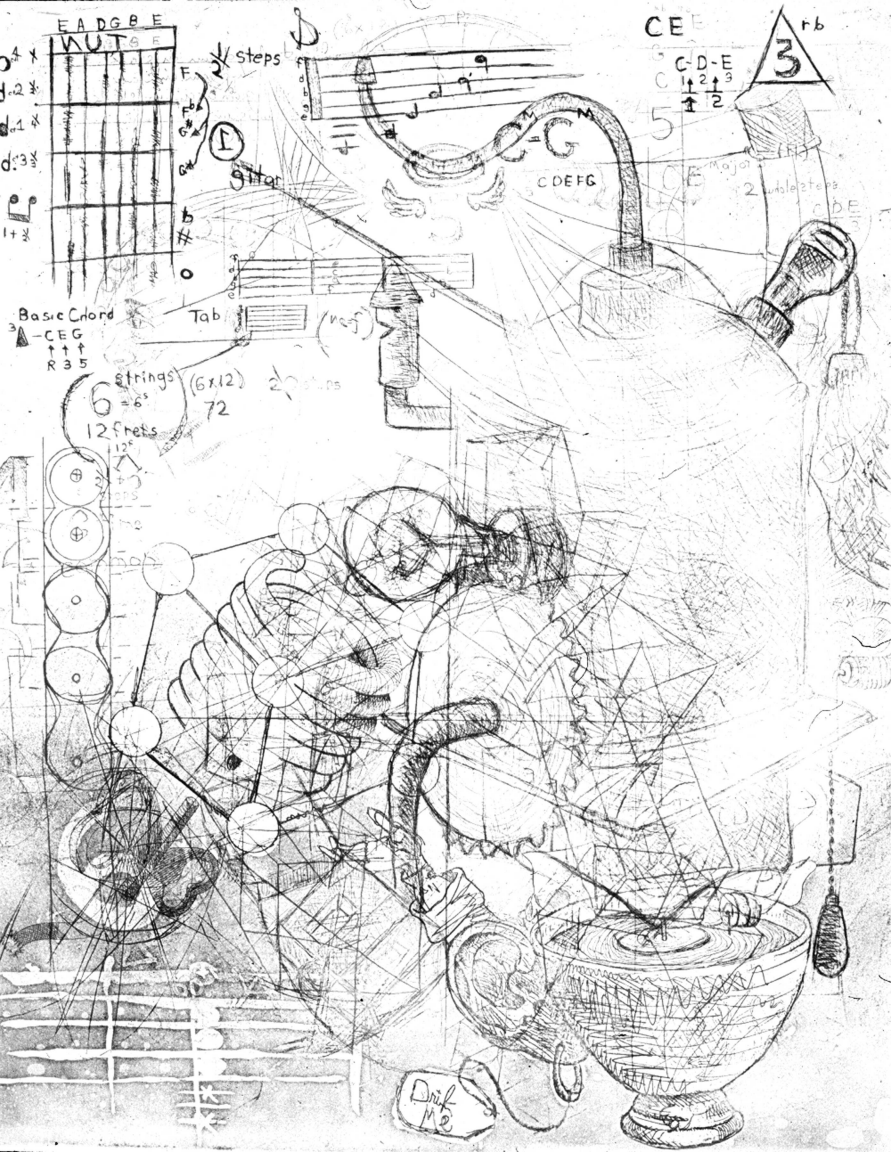
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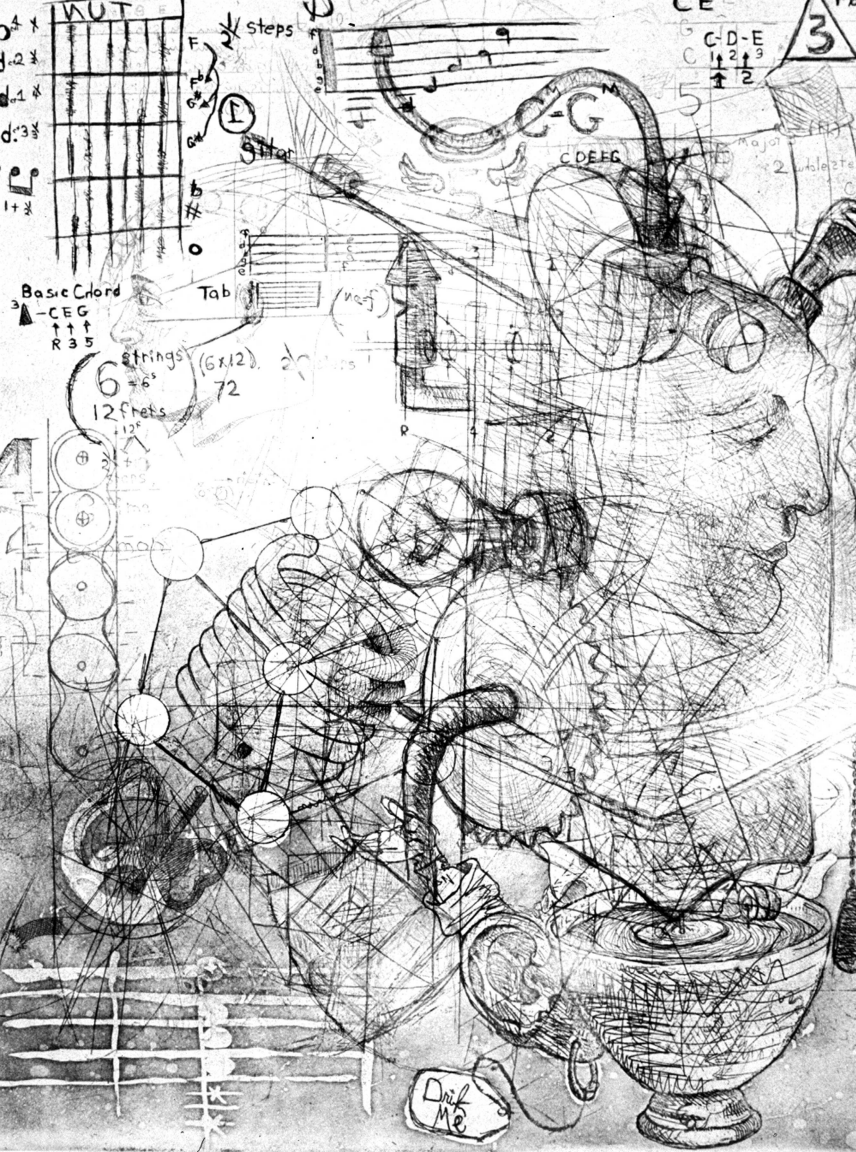
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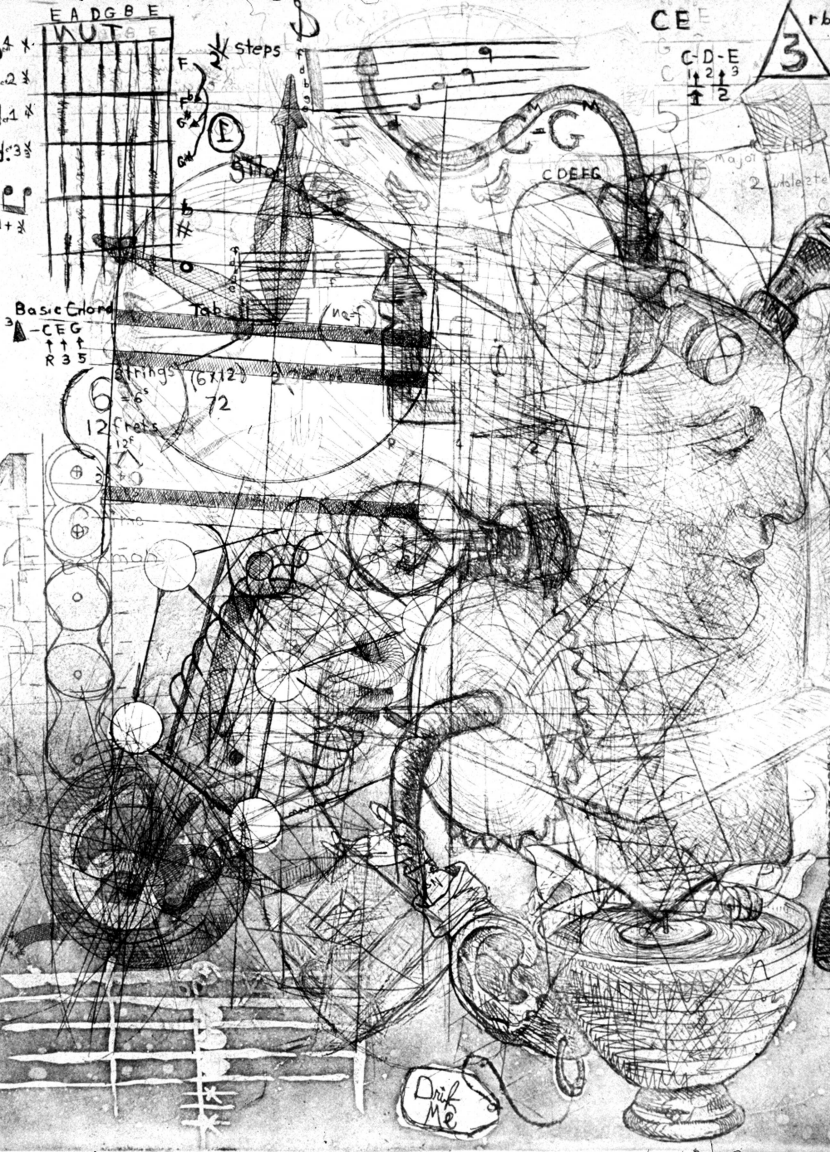
CHINA











E A D G B E

WUT

2 steps

CE

C-D-E

1 2 3

3

Basic Chord

-CEG
↑↑↑
R 3 5

strings (6x12)

= 6⁵ 72

12 frets

Drift Me

